

**FSCS STEERING COMMITTEE MEETING
March 16-17, 1992
EMBASSY SUITES HOTEL
WASHINGTON, D.C.**

**[Revisions from Carrol and
Adrienne in Brackets] 8/12/92**

Attendees:

Andrew Chen, NCES Consultant, Peace Technologies
Adrienne Chute, NCES
Darla Cottrill, FSCS Technical Committee
Kevin Davison, NCES Consultant, Peace Technologies
Carrol Kindel, NCES
Jan Feye-Stukas, FSCS Steering Committee (MN)
Keith Curry Lance, FSCS Steering/Analysis Committee
Libby Law, Co-Chair, FSCS Steering Committee (SC)
John G. Lorenz, NCLIS
Mary Jo Lynch, FSCS Steering Committee (ALA)
Kim Miller, NCLIS
Julie Pringle, Fairfax Co. Library (VA)
Mary Alice Hedge Reszetar, NCLIS
Gerry Rowland, FSCS Steering Committee (IA)
Peggy Rudd, FSCS Steering Committee (VA)
Joseph Shubert, FSCS Steering Committee (COSLA, NY)
E. Walter Terrie, FSCS Steering/Technical Committee (U. of FL)
Jan Walsh, Chair, Steering Committee (WA)
Jeff Williams, NCES
Doug Wright, NCES
John Wunderly, NCES Consultant, Pinkerton

Monday, March 16, 1992

I. OVERVIEW OF DECPLUS

Carrol Kindel spoke about DECPLUS, which combines DECTOP and PLUS to create a universe file. Combining the files will raise new issues about library statistics, provide better information, and save time and effort on mailings and edits. She asked the group for input on future direction, and for input on a DECPLUS manual. The major issue is definitions- DECTOP vs. PLUS definitions.

She handed out a "Time Schedule for DECPLUS Development".

Andrew Chen and John Wunderly demonstrated the new software, reviewing the new query system which allows for more variables than E.D. TABS, reviewing the data entry screens the new window to select existing entries/add new entry.

Questions raised included:

- What kind of record would be kept for deleted branches?
- Will wording in edit messages be changed?
- Would there be non-response flags?

John Lorenz pointed out that with DECPLUS we now have a universe file, and asked if its availability had been announced. Carol responded that it was not yet ready, but could go through the adjudication process and be released as a database file.

II. STATE LIBRARY SURVEY

Joe Shubert reported on the State Library Survey. As Chair of COSLA Statistics, he has been working with Nancy Bolt, Chair of COSLA Research, on a report to be presented April 3 at COSLA. It will recommend approval of the survey. Carol Kindel will work with them; a pilot test is expected in late 1992. The new survey will start the transition from the COSLA financial survey to an NCES survey. The goal is annual collection of at least some data elements. COSLA will be briefed on NCES by Carol Kindel and on DECTOP by John Tyson and Peggy Rudd.

Mary Jo Lynch added that one objective of COLSA was to reduce duplication in survey collection.

III. DATA QUALITY ISSUES

1. Timeframe

Carol Kindel announced that Public Libraries: 1990 E.D. TABS had been released electronically on March 10. She discussed the review and adjudication process at NCES, and reviewed the timeframe for the process, handing out "Chronology of Public Libraries: 1990 Publication Process". The printed report will not be released until July this year (it was released in May last year) because many States were late submitting data.

In comments on the draft E.D. TABS, the group noted that:

- they are titled: Public Libraries: 1990 but cited as Public Libraries in U.S. in the notes;
- the ALA accreditation definition was revised at the October Steering Committee meeting, but the change is not reflected in the draft document. It is inaccurate: ALA does not accredit colleges and universities;
- the definitions on 3 and #A don't match.

Action: Exact wording of the statement on accreditation was referred to the definitions group.

2. Data Quality Issues

Walt Terrie raised several major issues about data quality in the E.D. TABS.

a. Definition of "population"

Table 1A has 103.5% population because of service area overlaps. Because of duplicated population figures in States where library service areas overlap, State population figures do not match the totals for populations served. Further, base tables use a State-supplied population figure, and A tables use duplicated counts. The different population figures cause real problems when, as in table 1A, a duplicated count is divided by an unduplicated number. Walt suggested that an extra row be inserted in Table 1A and table 1 to include duplicated and unduplicated populations for each State.

Another variation of the same issue arises when, as in Table 3, the denominator is the sum of the responding library population. **[The group determined that the changes would be made for the 1991 data.]** It should also be changed from a per 10,000 to per 1,000 population. In table 5, the word "necessarily" should be eliminated from the note. The table does not show other federal funds. **[The group agreed that this change would be made for the 1990 data]**

- In Table 6, there is a difference of .26 if the unduplicated, vs. the duplicated population is used.
- In Table 11, he suggested that rather than per capita, per 1,000 population be used, to avoid fractions that are too small to adjust. **[What was group's decision?]**
- In Table 15, a per 1,000 population line is not needed. **[This was agreed to for 1990 data and beyond]**

Mary Jo Lynch noted that figures of duplicate populations served resulted from service area overlaps and duplicate tax districts, and stressed that this was a valid concept.

Carrol Kindel agreed that there were two major issues raised by a review of the E.D. TABS data:

- the implications of non-response by libraries
- the importance of being aware of the stated caveats (p.4) when using this data.

The survey definitions of populations, populations of legal service areas, reporting periods, and definitions of public libraries all make direct comparison difficult.

Adrienne Chute added that since the present definition of public library is "according to State law" Hawaii has 1 and Maine has 138. Different States also use different definitions of legal service areas; they use different sources for population; they count serials and books differently; and Librarians are not always defined as having MLS degrees. Additionally, there is always the possibility of inaccurate reporting by a State Data Coordinator. Doug Wright stressed that it is important to be aware that when definitions are changed you're not releasing comparable data because some numeric changes will be due to a change of definition. He added that we need a strategy for how to address these problems because if it's left this way, survey results will not be very useful for either times series analysis or State to State comparison. The goal should be to plan a strategy to address these issues next year and the year after by having better algorithms, reporting periods, and definitions.

Peggy Rudd suggested that a chronicle of exceptions would be useful in identifying problems to address.

It was agreed that some changes need to be made before we can say that we have true baseline data.

Action: Walt Terrie and Keith Lance will review [and provide in writing] algorithms used in the computation of data.

3. New Children's Data Elements

Mary Jo Lynch discussed the new Children's Output Measures Survey, a field-initiated demand for data which will emphasize children's materials use. She indicated that it would be desirable to have information on juvenile holdings, juvenile materials budgets, and juvenile population served as well as juvenile circulation and juvenile program attendance, which have been agreed on as new data elements for the survey.

Roughly one quarter to one third of the States already collect some of this data. She also emphasized the need for information about children's programming to take advantage of out-of-library interest in parent/care-giver involvement, family literacy, and the effect of summer reading programs.

She added, as a follow-up to the Research and Policy Seminar, that the issues of populations served, and poor and small libraries came up. A major issue is getting researchers to work with the data file and write position papers.

Action: Mary Jo Lynch made a motion to collect the two additional children's data elements, annual circulation of juvenile materials, and annual juvenile program attendance. The motion was seconded and passed. Mary Jo will write formal definitions to be sent out for a vote.

4. Technical Subcommittee Report

In her report Darla Cottrill raised the following issues:

- It is necessary to decide how the DECPLUS file will work - will it be a DECPLUS file or two separate files? How will updating the universe file be affected by the PLUS import file?
- A calculated variable should be part of the Query edit check.
- The value -2 should be assigned for a library that hasn't reported any data.
- Population issues need to be part of the December training.
- Item numbers in the DECTOP file shouldn't be changed when new items should be assigned letters - e.g. 7 a, b, c or they should be added to the end so that the import features States have designed don't need to be changed.

The Technical Committee also recommended that no final products pertaining to FSCS data be released without review by a designated person from the FSCS Steering Committee.

Action: After discussion, the following motion was passed: "Whenever an FSCS product goes through the adjudication process the Chair of the FSCS Steering Committee will recommend to the head of NCES the names of 2 people who will serve on the adjudication committee."

5. Definitions Committee Report

Jan Feye-Stukas reported that although at the October meeting, committee members had said that PLUS definitions should override DEC definitions, it's not that simple. She raised the following issues:

- How to code joint school/public and academic/public libraries; it was agreed that a new code would be desirable.
- A fax number should be added. It was agreed that the issue would be brought to State Data Coordinators for a vote.
- Where definitions have been changed, approval will be sought from State Data Coordinators.
- Definitions should be in the draft DECPLUS manual to go out in June.

The committee also identified several long term issues:

- Population - the committee agrees that the reported population should be the latest decennial census, but that is not written down, and is not being followed.
- Expenditure and income - is funding expended when it is obligated? What about carryover? The survey should note that it is OK not to have funds balance - e.g. carryover can make expenditures larger than income.
- The issue of reporting period should be clarified, and the data requested should be "data for 12 months whose fiscal year ended in 1991".
- It may be necessary to agree that figures for collection may vary because of the variations in definition of uncatalogued vs. catalogued items.

It was agreed that changes would be discussed at the August meeting of the FSCS Steering Committee, and brought to the December meeting with the State Data Coordinators.

6. Analysis Committee Report

Keith Lance recommended that the name of the Analysis Committee be changed to the Data Use Committee to more accurately reflect its mission. The charge and goals of the Data Use Committee were reviewed. It was agreed that more emphasis needs to be put on FSCS data use, and that it should be covered at the December Training Workshop.

Tuesday, March 17, 1992

1. State Data Coordinator Job Description

Jan Walsh distributed copies of the job description for State Data Coordinators. Minor revisions were suggested, and she was applauded for having done an excellent job.

Action: She will bring the revised job description to the August Steering Committee Meeting for final approval.

2. Return of Data by Deadline

Carrol Kindel and John Lorenz led a discussion of how to encourage State Data Coordinators to return data by the 7/31/92 deadline.

Action: It was agreed that Joe Shubert would bring it up as an issue at COSLA, and that Jan Walsh would assign Steering Committee members as mentors to specific State Data Coordinators.

3. Steering Committee Meeting Schedule

October 26 through 28 were selected as dates for the Fall FSCS meeting. Dates for the December Training Workshop in Alexandria, Va. were to be December 7 through 9.

4. Virginia Local Reporting Software

Peggy Rudd reported on DITAR, Virginia State Library's Data Input Tracking And Reporting software that will be used by local library systems to report data to the State. Staff in local library systems have attended training sessions, and she is currently doing final edits of the data. She described it as a comprehensive system with major reporting capabilities. In FY 93 they are planning to add major report features at the local library level. By July of 1993 all Virginia State data will be filed electronically, from the local level to the State, and by the State to NCES. They are investigating copyrighting the software to the Virginia State Library or the Commonwealth of Virginia.

DITAR has been demonstrated in New York State, and New York is testing it against their State data collection instrument. Keith Lance is also testing it in Colorado. DITAR will also be demonstrated at the COSLA meeting in April. The Virginia State Library is currently investigating what it would take to customize DITAR for individual States, and is planning to market it.

5. Topics for 5th Training Workshop in Alexandria, Va.

John Lorenz asked for suggestions for the Training Workshop. They were:

- more training on the analysis and use of data
- more hands-on training
- follow-up on the Virginia DITAR project
- more training and emphasis on improved data quality
- more training and emphasis on local data collection.

6. Texas Manual and Video

John Lorenz reported that the Texas manual is in production, and work on the video is in progress.

7. FSCS Handbook

Carrol Kindel would like to work pieces of the FSCS Handbook into [the DECPLUS user's guide] a user's manual and make it one (perhaps loose-leaf?) product so everything is in one place. It was agreed that such a manual would be useful. A discussion of desirable information for a manual included:

- bylaws of the Steering Committee
- rules for new data elements
- definitions
- job description
- history - including Mary Jo Lynch's Public Libraries article
- schedule for the coming year.

8. Algo Rhythms or God's Own Truth

Walt Terrie and Keith Lance disclosed their solution of the perplexing population divisor dilemma.

a. They proposed methodology to resolve issues relating to the population divisor to develop per capita figures when non-response and duplicated populations are present. They pointed out that assuming there is nothing systemic in non-reporting, their proposal will result in more accurate per capita figures; and the smaller the amount of duplication in a duplicated population the closer this methodology will be to the truth.

b. In Table 1 all three populations should be used:

- 1990 Census data for State
- unduplicated population for State
- duplicated population

A note in the text should explain the problem and issues.

c. Table 1A should use duplicated population only rather than use two figures.

d. The estimated denominator should appear in tables with per capita and/or per population.

e. Before a true base year is achieved, it is necessary to have:

- the new population divisor
- resolved the definitions issue.

9. Committee Reports

a. Technical Committee

Darla Cottrill reported on two major issues. The committee discussed how to handle "birth", "death", "marriage", and "divorce" of library entities. Also, when importing a PLUS file, if there is a discrepancy the screen will ask for a preference - what field do you want to change.

b. Definitions Committee

Jan Feye-Stukas reported that they had finished the comparison of DECTOP and PLUS definitions.

Action: The motion was made and passed that the merged and reworded definitions be sent out the State Data Coordinators. This exception to existing policy and procedures for adding, changing, or deleting a data element is being made to get them through in time for DECPLUS. Copies of the old and revised definitions will go to the Steering Committee members, then go out to Data Coordinators for a vote. Jan Feye-Stukas will do the cover memo, Adrienne Chute will prepare the new definitions documents.

10. It was announced that DATANET PLUS, with mapping upgrade, is now available for \$100.00. Details will follow in the FSCS memo.